

# **THE COMPLETE RV PARK & CAMPGROUND OPERATIONS COURSE**



**A Comprehensive Workbook for  
Owners & Managers 8 Modules |  
60+ Lessons | Worksheets & Action  
Steps Included**

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**RV PARK &  
CAMPGROUND  
OPERATIONS COURSE**

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# How to Use This Course

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Welcome to the most thorough operations resource available for RV park and campground owners and managers. Whether you're just getting started, taking over an existing property, or looking to level up a park you've run for years — this workbook is designed to meet you where you are.

Each module covers one critical pillar of park operations. Within each module you'll find:

- Clear, practical lessons written in plain language — no jargon
- Real-world examples from parks across the country
- Worksheets and reflection prompts to apply what you learn immediately
- Action steps you can implement before you even finish the module
- 'Pro Tip' callouts from experienced operators

You don't have to work through this course in order. If you're struggling with a specific area — staffing, marketing, pricing — feel free to skip to that module first. But if you're new to the business, or doing a full operational audit, working front to back will give you the most complete picture.

The goal of this course is simple: by the time you finish it, you'll know exactly what a world-class park looks like, where your gaps are, and how to close them.

## **A Note on the Worksheets**

The worksheets throughout this course are designed to be printed and filled in, or completed digitally. Don't skip them. The parks that see the biggest improvements from education like this are the ones that immediately apply what they learn. Each worksheet takes 10–20 minutes and is worth far more in practice than in theory.

Let's build something excellent !!!

# Course Overview

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Module	Topic
Module 1	Understanding the Business — Mindset, Models & the Market
Module 2	Reservations, Pricing & Revenue Management
Module 3	Guest Experience — From First Click to Five-Star Review
Module 4	Hiring, Training & Managing Your Team
Module 5	Facilities, Maintenance & Safety
Module 6	Financial Management & Key Performance Metrics
Module 7	Marketing, Digital Presence & Building Loyalty
Module 8	Growth, Technology & the Future of Your Park

Each module includes lessons, real-world examples, worksheets, and action steps. Estimated completion time per module: 1–2 hours of focused reading and reflection.

## MODULE 01

# Understanding the Business

## Mindset, Models &amp; the Market

Before you can run a great park, you need to understand what kind of business you're actually in. This module covers the foundations: the industry landscape, business models, the owner vs. manager mindset, and how to define what success looks like for your specific property.

## Lesson 1.1 — The Outdoor Hospitality Industry Today

The RV park and campground industry has never been stronger. Industry revenue is projected at \$10.9 billion in 2025, reflecting 8.3% annual growth since 2020. RV usage has grown 96% over the past decade. The supply of new parks, however, grows at only about 1% per year — meaning demand is consistently outpacing available sites.

What this means for you: you're operating in a fundamentally favorable market. The guests are out there. The question is whether your park is positioned to attract and retain them.

**\$10.9B**

Projected U.S. RV park and campground industry revenue in 2025, growing at 8.3% annually since 2020

Today's camper is different from the camper of 20 years ago. The modern outdoor hospitality guest:

- Expects reliable Wi-Fi and modern amenities alongside the outdoor experience
- Books online — often 30–90 days in advance for popular destinations
- Reads reviews before booking and writes them after leaving
- Wants experiences, not just a site — activities, events, and curated moments matter
- Includes a growing segment of remote workers, retirees, and millennial families

Understanding who is coming to your park — and who you want to attract — is the first step in building a business that serves them well.

## Lesson 1.2 — Business Models: Know Your Type

Not all parks are built the same, and the right operating strategy depends heavily on your model. The major categories:

Park Type	Operational Focus
DestinationResort	High amenity, higherADR, guests stay 3–7+ nights. Focus on experience and repeat guests.
Regional Stopover	Highway-adjacent, 1–2 night stays, high turnover. Focus on efficiency and convenience.
Seasonal Community	Monthly/annual residents, lower turnover, more like property management.
Mixed Model	Combination of nightly, weekly, and monthly guests — the most common type.
Glamping/Boutique	Premium accommodations, premium pricing, hospitality-forward operations.

Your business model determines everything from staffing levels to pricing strategy to amenity investment. Be honest about what type of park you run — and what type you want to become.

## Lesson 1.3 — Owner vs. Manager Mindset

One of the most important distinctions in this industry is the difference between working in your park and working on your park. Many owners get so caught up in daily operations that they never step back to think strategically about the business.

The Owner Mindset focuses on:

- Long-term value creation and asset appreciation
- Systems that work without the owner present
- Return on investment and profitability
- Strategic decisions: pricing, capital investment, market positioning

The Manager Mindset focuses on:

- Day-to-day guest experience and problem-solving
- Staff coordination and accountability
- Operational consistency and standards
- Real-time decision-making

Both mindsets are necessary. The most effective parks have owners who think like investors and managers who think like hospitality professionals. If you're owner-operator, you need to be able to switch between these roles — and know which hat you're wearing at any given moment.

## Lesson 1.4 — Defining Your Park's Identity

Every great park has a clear identity: a specific type of guest they serve exceptionally well, a distinct vibe, and a reason someone would choose them over a competitor. This isn't just marketing fluff — it's operational clarity.

Parks without a clear identity try to be everything to everyone and end up being nothing special to anyone. Parks with a clear identity attract guests who are a great fit, leave better reviews, and come back.

Your park's identity is built on three things:

- Your guest: Who are they? Families with young kids? Retirees? Remote workers? Weekend adventurers?
- Your setting: What makes your physical location unique? Views, water, trails, proximity to attractions?
- Your promise: What experience do guests always have at your park? What can they count on?

**WORKSHEET 1.1 — Defining Your Park's Identity Answer these questions honestly. Your responses will guide decisions throughout this entire course.**

**Who is your ideal guest? Describe them in detail (age, travel style, what they care about, what they're looking for):**

**What makes your park genuinely different from the nearest 3 competitors?**

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**If a guest described their perfect stay at your park in one sentence, what would you want that sentence to be?**

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## **Lesson 1.5 — Setting Goals That Actually Drive Your Business**

Vague goals produce vague results. 'I want to do better this year' is not a plan. Effective park operators set specific, measurable targets — and they review them regularly.

Key goals to set annually:

- Target occupancy rate by season (peak, shoulder, off-season)
- Average Daily Rate (ADR) target
- Total ancillary revenue goal (store, rentals, add-ons)
- Guest satisfaction target (review rating goal, repeat booking rate)
- Staff retention and training milestone
- Capital improvement objective

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**WORKSHEET 1.2 — My Park's Annual Goals** Fill in your targets for this year. We'll reference these throughout the course.

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## MODULE 02

# Reservations, Pricing & Revenue Management

Filling More Sites at Better Rates

Revenue management is the single highest-leverage skill in campground operations. It's not just about setting rates — it's about understanding demand, managing inventory, and capturing the maximum value from every available site night. This module will teach you to think about pricing the way the best hotels in the world do.

## Lesson 2.1 — How Campground Revenue Management Works

Revenue management is built on a simple principle: the same site has different values at different times, and you should price accordingly. A site on Memorial Day weekend is worth far more than the same site on a Tuesday in November. Charging the same rate for both is leaving money on the table.

The four core metrics of campground revenue management:

Metric	Definition & Formula
Occupancy Rate	% of available site-nights sold. Formula: $\text{Sites Occupied} \div \text{Sites Available} \times 100$
ADR (Average Daily Rate)	Average rate charged per site. Formula: $\text{Total Site Revenue} \div \text{Nights Sold}$
RevPAS (Revenue Per Available Site)	The gold standard metric. Formula: $\text{ADR} \times \text{Occupancy Rate}$
Ancillary Revenue Per Guest	Total non-site revenue divided by guest count. Tracks store, rentals, add-ons.

RevPAS is the metric that matters most because it captures both price and utilization in one number. A park with 90% occupancy at \$30/night has lower RevPAS than a park with 75% occupancy at \$55/night. Always optimize for RevPAS, not just occupancy.

# 14%

Average profit margin for RV parks nationally —but top-performing parks with strong revenue management consistently achieve 25–35%

## Lesson 2.2 — Building Your Pricing Structure

- Premium: Best views, waterfront, extra space, near amenities — price 25–40% above base
- Standard: Average hookup, good condition, typical location — your baseline
- Value: Back corners, less privacy, smaller, older hookups — price 10–15% below base
- Specialty: Pull-throughs for big rigs, pet-friendly with fenced areas, glamping units — premium pricing

### Step 2: Set Your Seasonal Rate Structure

Divide your year into at minimum three pricing seasons:

- Peak season (your highest demand months): Set rates at full market value
- Shoulder season (spring and fall): Set 15–25% below peak to encourage travel
- Off-season (your lowest demand period): Set rates to incentivize occupancy while covering costs

### Step 3: Create Day-of-Week Differentials

Weekend demand is almost always higher than weekday demand. Set Friday and Saturday rates at 15–30% above your weekday rate. Offer weekday specials to drive midweek occupancy.

## Lesson 2.3 — Dynamic Pricing in Practice

Dynamic pricing means adjusting rates in real time based on demand signals. You raise rates when you're filling up fast, and offer discounts when sites are sitting empty.

Demand signals to watch:

- Your own booking pace: are you filling faster or slower than the same period last year?
- Local events: concerts, festivals, sporting events, holiday weekends
- Competitor availability: if nearby parks are full, you can charge more
- Weather forecasts: unseasonably beautiful weather in shoulder season creates demand spikes

Parks that implement dynamic pricing consistently report 15–30% revenue increases without adding a single new site. The key is to automate it with software rather than trying to manage it manually — manual rate management across multiple booking channels is a full-time job and error-prone.

**Pro Tip: Automate It**

The best park management platforms include dynamic pricing tools or integrate with third-party pricing engines that monitor your occupancy and competitor rates in real time. Set your floor price (the minimum you'll accept) and your ceiling price (your maximum), and let the system optimize within that range. Review results weekly and adjust your parameters as you learn what the market will bear.

## Lesson 2.4 — Length of Stay Strategy

Length of stay is an underused lever in most parks. Here's how to use it strategically:

- Minimum stay requirements on peak weekends: Require 2–3 night minimums on holiday weekends to prevent single-night gaps that are hard to fill last minute
- Extended stay discounts: Offer 10–15% discounts for weekly stays, 25–30% for monthly. These guests reduce your turnover workload and guarantee revenue
- Length-of-stay upsells: When a guest books 2 nights, show them the savings from staying 3 or 4

Long-term guests (monthly stays) deserve special attention. They're lower-maintenance than nightly guests, provide stable cash flow, and often become your most loyal advocates. Consider a formal monthly/seasonal program with its own rate structure and perks.

## Lesson 2.5 — The Reservation Process: From Booking to Arrival

Your reservation process is your first guest touchpoint — and it sets the tone for the entire stay. A smooth, professional booking experience builds confidence. A clunky, confusing one starts the relationship on the wrong foot.

Best practices for a world-class reservation process:

- Online booking: At minimum 70% of bookings should be available online. Guests expect this.
- Real-time availability: Your booking system should show live site availability, not require a callback
- Confirmation email: Sent immediately, includes site details, arrival instructions, park rules, and what to bring
- Pre-arrival communication: A 3–5 day pre-arrival email with directions, weather, local tips, and upsell offers
- Check-in process: Aim for under 5 minutes. Pre-arrival digital check-in is even better.
- Welcome packet: On arrival, provide a one-page park guide with map, hours, rules, emergency contacts

**WORKSHEET 2.1 — Pricing Audit List your current site types, their prices, and what you think they SHOULD be priced at after completing this module. Note any changes you want to make.**

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**WORKSHEET 2.2 — Demand Calendar Map out your year: mark your peak periods, shoulder periods, and off-season. Note any local events that create demand spikes. This becomes your pricing calendar.**

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## MODULE 03

# Guest Experience

From First Click to Five-Star Review

The guest experience is your product. Everything else in this course — pricing, marketing, staffing, facilities — exists in service of delivering an experience so good that guests come back and tell their friends. This module is about understanding what guests actually want, and building systems that deliver it consistently.

## Lesson 3.1 — The Guest Journey

Every guest goes through the same journey with your park. Understanding each stage helps you identify where you're delighting guests and where you're dropping the ball.

Stage	What the Guest Is Experiencing
Discovery	Guest finds your park online, sees a review, hears from a friend. First impression formed.
Research	Guest explores your website, reads reviews, looks at photos, checks availability.
Booking	Guest makes a reservation. Ease and professionalism matter enormously here.
Pre-Arrival	Guest receives communications, gets excited, plans their trip.
Arrival & Check-In	First physical impression. Friendliness, speed, and clarity set the tone.
On-Property Stay	The core experience. Every interaction with staff, every facility, every activity.
Departure	Check-out experience. How you end matters as much as how you begin.
Post-Stay	Review, social share, rebooking. The loop that drives your long-term growth.

Most parks focus almost entirely on the on-property stay. The best parks deliver intentionally at every stage — which is why their reviews, their repeat booking rates, and their referrals are dramatically better.

## Lesson 3.2 — What Guests Actually Remember

Research in hospitality consistently shows that guests remember the beginning, the end, and any unexpected peak moments — positive or negative. This is called the Peak-End Rule.

What this means practically:

- Your arrival experience (check-in, first look at the site, first interaction with staff) is disproportionately important
- Your departure experience (ease of check-out, farewell from staff, any parting gesture) is disproportionately important
- Any unexpected moment of delight (a staff member remembering a guest's name, a surprise welcome treat, a staff member going out of their way) creates lasting positive memory
- Any unexpected moment of frustration (a problem ignored, a rude interaction, a dirty facility at a key moment) creates lasting negative memory

You cannot afford to be average at the moments that matter most. Build specific standards for your arrival experience and your departure experience, and train your staff on them explicitly.

### Lesson 3.3 — Handling Guest Complaints Like a Pro

No matter how well you run your park, complaints will happen. How you handle them determines whether you lose a guest forever or turn them into one of your most loyal advocates.

The HEARD framework for complaint resolution:

- **Hear:** Let the guest fully explain their concern without interruption
- **Empathize:** Acknowledge their frustration genuinely — 'I completely understand why that's frustrating'
- **Apologize:** For the experience, not necessarily for fault — 'I'm sorry your stay has been affected by this'
- **Resolve:** Fix the problem immediately if possible, or give a clear timeline if not
- **Delight:** Go one step beyond the resolution — a small gesture, a discount off their next stay, a genuine follow-up

A complaint handled excellently is worth more than no complaint at all. Guests who have a problem resolved well are statistically more loyal than guests who never had a problem. They have a story to tell — and you want it to be a positive one.

#### **Pro Tip: The Walk-Around**

Industry veteran advice: walk your park at least once a day during peak season. Not to inspect — to connect. Say hello to guests, ask how their stay is going, notice problems before they become complaints. 'Walk your park' is the single most cited piece of advice from experienced campground operators. It costs nothing and delivers enormous returns in guest satisfaction and staff culture.

### Lesson 3.4 — Building Loyalty and Repeat Bookings

The most profitable guest is one you already have. Repeat guests cost nothing to acquire, arrive already loving your park, and tell their friends. Building loyalty is one of the highest-ROI activities in park management.

Practical loyalty-building strategies:

- Remember returning guests: 'Welcome back, the Garcias — great to see you again' is worth a thousand marketing dollars
- Loyalty program: Simple punch card or digital system — stay X nights, get a free night
- Email list: Every guest's email address is a direct communication channel. Use it.
- Annual newsletter: A seasonal update about what's new at the park, upcoming events, and an exclusive early-booking offer
- Birthday/anniversary recognition: If guests mention a celebration at booking, acknowledge it on arrival
- Returnee discount: A modest discount for guests who rebook before they leave can dramatically increase your repeat booking rate

**WORKSHEET 3.1 — Guest Experience Audit** Walk through each stage of your guest journey and rate it honestly from 1–10. Where are your lowest scores? Those are your priorities.

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**WORKSHEET 3.2 — Three Signature Moments** Describe three specific moments you want every guest at your park to experience. These become your non-negotiable experience standards.

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**MODULE 04****Hiring, Training & Managing Your Team****Building a Staff That Runs Like Clockwork**

Your staff is your park. Not your amenities, not your location, not your marketing — your people. The guest experience is delivered by humans, and the quality of that experience is directly proportional to how well you hire, train, and manage your team.

**Lesson 4.1 — What Makes a Great Campground Employee**

Campground work is not for everyone. The best campground employees share a specific profile that's worth understanding before you post your next job listing.

Non-negotiable traits:

- **Genuine warmth:** Guests can tell the difference between someone who likes people and someone who tolerates them
- **Calm under pressure:** Peak season with a full park is stressful — your team needs to stay professional
- **Problem-solving mindset:** Things go wrong constantly in a campground. You need people who fix problems, not just report them
- **Flexibility:** Seasons change, tasks overlap, emergencies happen. Rigid people struggle in this environment
- **Pride in the property:** Staff who take ownership of how the park looks and feels create an entirely different environment

Skills can be taught. Attitude cannot. Hire for character, then train for competence.

**Lesson 4.2 — The Hiring Process**

Most campgrounds underinvest in the hiring process and then overpay in turnover, retraining, and guest complaints. A structured hiring process pays for itself quickly.

A basic hiring framework:

- **Write a real job description:** Include the actual working conditions (outdoor, physical, weekend work required), not just the nice-sounding parts
- **Screen for attitude in the application:** Ask one behavioral question — 'Describe a time you turned a frustrated customer into a happy one'
- **Conduct a working interview:** Have finalists shadow a shift before you make an offer. You'll learn more in two hours than in two interviews
- **Check references:** Call them. Ask specifically about reliability and how they handle difficult guests

- Set clear expectations on Day 1: Job description, performance standards, schedule, communication norms

For seasonal operations, consider building a pipeline of returning staff. An employee who comes back for a second or third season is worth far more than a new hire. Treat your seasonal staff like they matter — because they do.

### **Work Campers: An Underused Resource**

Work campers are RV enthusiasts who trade labor for a free or discounted site. They're often retired, deeply experienced, and genuinely passionate about the outdoor lifestyle. Many park owners report that work campers are among their best employees. Platforms like Workamper News and CoolWorks connect parks with interested candidates.

## **Lesson 4.3 — Training That Actually Works**

'You don't have a lot of time to train seasonal staff,' as one experienced operator puts it. This means your training needs to be efficient, practical, and repeatable — not a stack of manuals nobody reads.

The four pillars of effective campground staff training:

### **1. The Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Manual**

Document how everything works at your park. Check-in process, complaint resolution, emergency procedures, maintenance protocols, store operations — all of it. This isn't just for training — it's your backup when key staff are unavailable, and your reference when disputes arise.

### **2. Shadow Shifts**

New employees should shadow an experienced team member for their first 2–3 shifts before working independently. This is the fastest, most effective form of training in hospitality.

### **3. Scenario Training**

Walk new staff through realistic scenarios: 'A guest arrives and their site is already occupied — what do you do?' Scenario training builds confidence and reveals gaps before they appear with real guests.

### **4. Regular Brief Team Meetings**

At the start of each peak season and before major events, gather your whole team for a 30–60 minute briefing. Cover expectations, known issues, upcoming events, and any changes. Teams that communicate clearly perform better.

## **Lesson 4.4 — Managing Performance and Culture**

How you manage your team determines what kind of park you run. Parks with strong, positive team cultures have lower turnover, better guest experiences, and higher morale — all of which feed directly into your bottom line.

Practical management principles:

- Set clear expectations before you evaluate performance — you can't hold people to standards they don't know
- Catch people doing things right: recognition is more powerful than correction in building positive culture
- Address problems immediately and privately — don't let performance issues fester
- Ask for input: staff who deal with guests daily often have the best ideas for improvement
- Cross-train where possible: staff who can handle multiple roles give you flexibility and give themselves growth

Turnover is expensive. The cost of replacing a single employee — recruiting, training, lost productivity — is estimated at 50–100% of that employee's annual compensation. Retaining good people is a financial strategy, not just a nice idea.

**WORKSHEET 4.1 — Team Assessment List your current staff roles and evaluate: Do you have the right people? What training gaps exist? What would you change if you could hire anyone?**

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**WORKSHEET 4.2 — Your Top 3 Training Priorities Based on guest feedback and your own observations, what are the three things your team needs to do better? How will you address each one?**

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**MODULE 05****Facilities, Maintenance & Safety**

The Foundation Everything Else Is Built On

Clean, well-maintained facilities are not optional — they are the baseline expectation of every guest. Facilities failures are the most common source of negative reviews, and the most preventable. This module covers how to build maintenance systems that keep your park running smoothly and safely.

**Lesson 5.1 — Why Facilities Are a Revenue Issue**

It's tempting to think of maintenance as a cost center — money going out, nothing coming in. But facilities quality directly drives revenue in three ways:

- **Reviews:** 'The bathrooms were disgusting' is the death knell of a campground's online reputation. Facility complaints dominate negative reviews in the industry.
- **ADR:** Guests pay more for parks that look and feel well-maintained. A premium price requires a premium presentation.
- **Repeat bookings:** Guests who loved the cleanliness and upkeep come back. Guests who were disappointed don't.

Think of your maintenance program as a guest experience investment, not just a cost. A park where everything works, everything is clean, and nothing looks run-down tells guests they made a good choice.

**Lesson 5.2 — Building a Preventive Maintenance Program**

Reactive maintenance — fixing things after they break — is expensive and disruptive. Preventive maintenance — inspecting and servicing things before they fail — is far more cost-effective and far less likely to ruin a guest's stay.

The three tiers of a preventive maintenance program:

**Daily Tasks**

- **Bathhouses and restrooms:** minimum twice-daily cleaning during peak season, before 9am and after 4pm
- **Common areas:** litter pickup, fire pit clearing, table and bench inspection
- **Site inspections:** walk occupied sites to identify any guest-facing issues
- **Utility connections:** note any hookup issues reported or observed

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**Weekly Tasks**

- **Deep bathhouse cleaning:** scrubbing, disinfecting, caulk inspection, drain clearing

- Mowing and landscaping: curb appeal matters every day, not just opening weekend
- Laundry room inspection and cleaning
- Playground and recreation equipment safety check
- Pool chemistry and cleanliness (if applicable)

### Seasonal / Annual Tasks

- Electrical hookup inspection and testing
- Water system flushing and pressure testing
- Road and pathway grading and repair
- Roof and structure inspection on all buildings
- Septic system inspection
- Fire extinguisher certification
- Emergency lighting and safety equipment check

## Lesson 5.3 — The Maintenance Log: Your Best Management Tool

A maintenance log is one of the most valuable management tools a park can have — and most parks don't use one effectively. A proper maintenance log tracks:

- Every reported issue: who reported it, when, what site or area
- Every completed task: what was done, when, who completed it
- Every scheduled inspection: with results and any follow-up needed
- Every vendor interaction: what was serviced, cost, warranty status

A good maintenance log tells you: what's been fixed, what's pending, what keeps breaking (and may need replacing), and how your team is performing on maintenance accountability. Parks with digital maintenance systems can assign tasks, track completion, and build historical records that are invaluable for budgeting and staff management.

## Lesson 5.4 — Safety and Compliance Essentials

Campground safety isn't just a legal obligation — it's a moral one. Guests trust you with their families' safety. Taking that seriously protects your guests and your business.

Essential safety areas for every campground:

- Fire safety: Clear fire lanes, adequate fire extinguisher placement, fire ring safety rules clearly posted and enforced
- Electrical safety: Regular hookup inspection, GFCI protection, no overloaded circuits
- Water safety: Pool fencing and depth markings, lifeguard requirements if applicable, regular water quality testing
- Emergency procedures: Every staff member must know the emergency response plan — who to call, how to respond, where the nearest hospital is



## MODULE 06

# Financial Management & Key Performance Metrics

Know Your Numbers, Grow Your Business

You can't improve what you don't measure. Financial literacy is one of the most underdeveloped skills in the campground industry — and one of the highest-leverage areas for improvement. This module gives you the financial framework to understand exactly how your park is performing and where your opportunities are.

## Lesson 6.1 — Understanding Your Revenue Sources

Most parks have more revenue sources than they track carefully. A complete picture of your revenue includes:

Revenue Source	Description
Site Rentals	Nightly, weekly, monthly—your primary revenue stream
Ancillary Lodging	Cabins, glamping units, rental trailers — premium accommodation revenue
Camp Store	Retail sales: consumables, gear, merchandise, food and beverage
Equipment Rental	Golf carts, kayaks, bikes, fishing gear, and other rentals
Activities & Events	Guided experiences, themed weekends, event hosting fees
Laundry & Amenities	Coin-operated machines, shower fees, Wi-Fi upgrades
Storage	Off-season vehicle, RV, and boat storage
Vendor & Partner Fees	Food truck fees, vendor market commissions, referral revenue

Track each of these separately. You need to know not just your total revenue, but which sources are growing, which are declining, and which are underperforming their potential.

## Lesson 6.2 — Understanding Your Cost Structure

Your costs fall into two categories: fixed costs (which stay relatively constant regardless of occupancy) and variable costs (which rise and fall with guest volume).

Typical fixed costs for a campground:

- Mortgage or lease payment
- Property taxes and insurance
- Year-round staff salaries
- Utility base rates and infrastructure costs
- Technology and software subscriptions

Typical variable costs:

- Seasonal labor
- Utility usage (electricity, water, waste) proportional to occupancy
- Supplies and consumables
- Maintenance materials (increases with occupancy and activity)
- OTA commission fees (typically 6–15% of bookings made through third-party platforms)

Understanding your cost structure helps you make smarter decisions. Knowing your break-even occupancy rate — the occupancy level at which your revenue covers your costs — is essential for financial planning.

## Lesson 6.3 — The Five KPIs Every Park Should Track

If you're not already tracking these metrics monthly, start immediately. These five numbers tell you more about your park's health than anything else.

KPI	Definition & Why It Matters
Occupancy Rate	$\text{Sites occupied} \div \text{sites available} \times 100$ . Track overall and by site type. Industry average: 60–70% annually.
Average Daily Rate (ADR)	$\text{Total site revenue} \div \text{nights sold}$ . Track monthly to see rate trends over time.
RevPAS	$\text{ADR} \times \text{Occupancy Rate}$ . The combined metric that captures both pricing and utilization.
Ancillary Revenue Per Guest	$\text{Total non-site revenue} \div \text{total guest count}$ . Tracks how much guests spend beyond site rental.
Net Operating Income (NOI)	$\text{Total Revenue} - \text{Total Operating Expenses}$ . The truest measure of profitability.

# 60–70%

Average annual occupancy rate for U.S. RV parks —top-performing parks with strong marketing and pricing consistently exceed 80% in peak months

## Lesson 6.4 — Reading and Using Your Financial Statements

### Three financial statements drive park management decisions:

#### The Income Statement (P&L)

Shows revenue, expenses, and profit over a period of time. Review monthly. Look for trends: Is revenue growing? Are expenses outpacing revenue? What's your actual profit margin?

#### The Balance Sheet

Shows what you own (assets) vs. what you owe (liabilities) at a point in time. Review quarterly. Tracks the overall financial health and value of the business.

#### The Cash Flow Statement

Shows cash coming in and going out. For seasonal businesses like campgrounds, this is critical—you can be profitable on paper but cash-poor in winter. Review monthly and forecast 90 days ahead.

If financial statements feel overwhelming, consider working with an accountant who specializes in hospitality or small businesses. Many campground owners have significantly improved their tax position and financial clarity with professional help.

## Lesson 6.5 — Budgeting for Seasonality

Campground cash flow is seasonal by nature. Your peak months generate the revenue that has to carry your off-peak months. A solid financial plan accounts for this.

- Build a 12-month budget: month by month revenue projections and expense forecasts
- Set aside reserves: target 3–6 months of operating expenses in reserve before your off-season
- Time major expenses wisely: schedule large maintenance projects and capital purchases for after your peak season when cash flow is strongest
- Plan for shoulder season: an effective marketing and programming strategy for your shoulder season can meaningfully smooth your cash flow curve

**WORKSHEET 6.1 — My Park's KPI Dashboard** Fill in your current performance data for each of the five core KPIs. Calculate your monthly RevPAS. Set a target for each metric for the next 12 months.

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**WORKSHEET 6.2 — Revenue Source Breakdown List every revenue source at your park. What is your current monthly average for each? Which sources are you most underutilizing?**

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## MODULE 07

# Marketing, Digital Presence & Building Loyalty

Getting Found, Getting Booked, Getting Rebooked

2026 Edition

Marketing is how you fill your park. And in 2025, the vast majority of marketing happens online — which means your digital presence is your first impression for most guests who will ever stay with you. This module covers everything from your website and reviews to social media and email marketing.

## Lesson 7.1 — Your Website: Your Most Important Marketing Asset

Your website is where guests decide whether to book. It needs to do three things well: load fast, look beautiful, and make booking effortless.

Non-negotiable website elements:

- Professional photography: Real, high-quality photos of your sites, amenities, and setting. Photos are the single most important element on a campground website.
- Clear booking button: Visible on every page, above the fold, impossible to miss
- Mobile optimization: More than 60% of campground searches happen on mobile. If your site doesn't work perfectly on a phone, you're losing bookings.
- Site map or park layout: Let guests see exactly what they're booking
- Amenity list with photos: Don't just list amenities — show them
- Reviews and testimonials: Social proof is more persuasive than any description you write
- Local area information: What is there to do near your park? Be the local expert.

## Lesson 7.2 — Online Reviews: Your Most Powerful Marketing Tool

Online reviews are, for most campgrounds, the highest-impact marketing channel available. A one-star improvement in your Google rating has been shown to increase revenue by 5–9% in hospitality businesses.

Building a strong review profile:

- Ask for reviews — proactively: Train staff to ask at checkout, 'If you enjoyed your stay, we'd really appreciate a review on Google. It makes a huge difference for us.'
- Automated review requests: A post-stay email sent 24–48 hours after checkout with a direct link to your Google review page converts well

- Respond to every review: This signals to potential guests that you're engaged and professional. For negative reviews especially, your response is often more persuasive than the complaint itself
- Don't fight negative reviews: Respond calmly, acknowledge the concern, explain what you've done to address it. Defensiveness looks terrible.
- Fix the systemic issues: If the same complaint appears in multiple reviews, that's not a guest problem — that's an operations problem

# 56%

Of campers who struggled to find available campsites in 2024 due to full bookings — strong reviews and visibility are critical to capturing demand

## Lesson 7.3 — Social Media That Actually Works

Social media for campgrounds is not about going viral. It's about staying visible to your past guests and showing potential guests what their experience could look like.

Platforms that matter for campgrounds:

- Facebook: Still the dominant platform for RV enthusiasts and family campers. Great for events, community building, and reaching an older demographic
- Instagram: Essential for visual storytelling. Sunsets, fire pits, happy guests, gorgeous scenery — this is your brand in image form
- YouTube: Long-form video content performs extremely well for campground discovery. A tour of your park, a 'what to expect' video, or a local area guide can drive bookings for years
- TikTok: Growing fast with younger campers and road trip audiences. Short, authentic content works well here

Content that performs well for campgrounds:

- 'Golden hour' and weather moments — atmospheric photos guests want to share
- Behind-the-scenes content — guests love seeing the real people who run their favorite parks
- Guest features — with permission, share guest photos and stories
- Local tips and area guides — position your park as the local authority
- Event announcements and recaps — builds a calendar-following audience

**Consistency Over Perfection**

You don't need a professional photographer or a marketing team. You need to post consistently — even 2–3 times per week with a phone camera beats posting perfect content once a month. Build a simple content calendar and stick to it.

## Lesson 7.4 — Email Marketing: Your Most Direct Channel

Every guest who has stayed at your park and given you their email address is a potential repeat booking. An email list is the most valuable marketing asset a campground can build — and most parks underuse it dramatically.

Email marketing basics for campgrounds:

- Grow your list: Capture email addresses at booking, at check-in, and through your website. Never buy lists.
- Send a newsletter: Quarterly at minimum, monthly is better. Include park updates, upcoming events, seasonal tips, and an exclusive offer for subscribers.
- Automate key messages: Booking confirmation, pre-arrival email, post-stay follow-up, review request, and birthday/anniversary message if you collect those dates
- Segment your list: New guests get different messages than returning guests. Local guests get different messages than out-of-state travelers.
- Subject lines matter: The best email in the world is worthless if nobody opens it. Write subject lines that are specific, curiosity-driving, or urgency-based

## Lesson 7.5 — Direct Bookings vs. OTA Strategy

Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) like Hipcamp, KOA.com, and Campspot Marketplace drive real bookings — but they take a commission of typically 6–15% of the booking value. A booking made directly through your own website costs you nothing in commission.

A smart OTA strategy:

- Use OTAs for discovery: They get you in front of guests who don't know you yet
- Capture guests for direct rebooking: Once a guest has stayed, they should book directly next time. Make this easy and give them a reason to (a small direct-booking discount, exclusive availability, etc.)
- Maintain rate parity: Avoid undercutting your own pricing — this creates friction with OTA partners
- Optimize your OTA profiles: Accurate, complete listings with great photos rank higher and convert better

**WORKSHEET 7.1 — Digital Presence Audit Rate your park on each element: Website (photos, mobile, booking ease), Google Business Profile (completeness, review count, rating), Social media (frequency, quality, engagement), Email list (size, frequency of use). Where are your gaps?**


## MODULE 08

# Growth, Technology & the Future of Your Park

Building a Business That Keeps Getting Better

The parks that will thrive over the next decade are the ones building now — investing in technology, planning for growth, and staying ahead of what today's and tomorrow's guests expect. This final module ties everything together and looks at where the industry is heading.

## Lesson 8.1 — Technology as an Operational Foundation

Technology in campground management has advanced dramatically in recent years. What was once a stack of handwritten reservation logs and manually updated availability calendars is now a sophisticated ecosystem of integrated tools.

The core technology stack for a modern campground:

Tool Category	Function
Park Management Software (PMS)	Your central operating system: reservations, site assignment, guest records, payments, reporting
Dynamic Pricing Engine	Automates rate adjustment based on occupancy, demand, and competitive data
Point-of-Sale System	Manages camp store transactions, rental check-outs, and activity bookings — ideally integrated with your PMS
Digital Communication Tools	Automated emails, SMS messaging for guest communications, review requests
Maintenance Management	Digital task assignment, completion tracking, and historical records for maintenance and facilities
Financial / Accounting	QuickBooks, Xero, or similar — integrated with your PMS for accurate, real-time financial visibility

The key word is integrated. Disconnected tools created data silos and manual work. The right PMS connects your booking engine, your point of sale, your communications, and your financial reporting into one coherent picture of your business.

### What to Look For in a Park Management System

The best systems do more than process reservations. Look for: integrated upsell and add-on capability at booking, automated pre-arrival and post-stay communications, mobile access for staff anywhere on property, real-time availability and site map views, guest history and CRM features, built-in or integrated dynamic pricing, and clean intuitive reporting dashboards. The right software doesn't just save time — it actively captures revenue that manual processes would miss.

## Lesson 8.2 — Smart Growth: Adding Revenue Without Adding Sites

The fastest path to higher revenue isn't always adding more sites — it's extracting more value from the sites you already have. Smart growth strategies:

- Add one premium accommodation: A single glamping unit or cabin can dramatically increase your average nightly revenue
- Deepen your amenity offering: Equipment rentals, guided experiences, and events add revenue without infrastructure
- Build membership and loyalty programs: Pre-committed revenue from season pass holders and loyal guests
- Develop off-season revenue streams: Storage, events, off-season programming
- Invest in marketing before infrastructure: Often a \$5,000 marketing and digital presence investment outperforms a \$50,000 amenity addition

When you do consider physical expansion — adding sites, adding structures, expanding parking — build an economic case first. What is the projected return on investment? How long until the investment pays for itself? What occupancy rate do you need to break even on the new addition?

## Lesson 8.3 — Trends That Will Shape the Next Five Years

Staying ahead of industry trends lets you make strategic decisions before your competitors do. Here's where the outdoor hospitality industry is clearly heading:

- EV charging as a baseline amenity: With 24% of campers already owning EVs and that number growing rapidly, parks without charging capability will be at a meaningful disadvantage within 3–5 years
- Remote work integration: The 'work from anywhere' movement is permanent. Parks that design for remote workers — reliable high-speed Wi-Fi, quiet workspaces, weekly and monthly rates — will capture a growing and high-value demographic
- Wellness and experience tourism: Guests increasingly want their stay to be transformative, not just pleasant. Wellness programming, guided nature experiences, and mindfulness-focused amenities will continue to grow
- Sustainability expectations: Eco-conscious guests are a growing segment. Solar installations, recycling programs, water conservation, and natural landscaping are becoming differentiators

- **Technology-enabled personalization:** The best parks of the future will know their guests' preferences and anticipate their needs — this requires good data, which requires good software
- **Direct booking emphasis:** As OTA fees continue to rise, the parks with the strongest direct booking engines and loyalty programs will have a significant cost advantage

## Lesson 8.4 — Building a Business That Doesn't Depend on You

This is one of the most important and least-discussed goals in campground management: building a park that runs well whether you're there or not. This is not about abdicating responsibility — it's about creating resilience and freedom.

The pillars of a self-sustaining park operation:

- **Documented systems:** Everything important is written down. Check-in procedures, emergency protocols, maintenance schedules, pricing rules — all documented and accessible to staff
- **Trained, empowered staff:** Employees who know what to do and are trusted to do it don't need the owner present for every decision
- **Technology that runs without you:** Automated booking, communications, and pricing tools work 24/7 regardless of who's in the office
- **Clear performance metrics:** When you can see your occupancy, revenue, and guest satisfaction in a dashboard, you don't need to be on-site to know how your park is performing
- **A succession plan:** Whether you're planning to sell, bring in a partner, or eventually hand off to family, having clear operational documentation dramatically increases your park's value and transferability

The goal isn't to remove the human touch from your park — it's to ensure that the human touch your guests experience is consistent, warm, and excellent every single day, regardless of who's managing the shift.

## Lesson 8.5 — Your 90-Day Action Plan

Education without action is just information. Here is a practical 90-day framework to begin implementing what you've learned in this course:

Phase	Focus Areas
Days 1–30: Audit & Foundation	Complete all worksheets. Identify your top 3 priorities. Begin financial KPI tracking. Audit your website and review profile.
Days 31–60: Quick Wins	Implement tiered pricing. Launch pre-arrival upsell email. Start weekly park walk-arounds. Create maintenance checklist. Begin review request process.



# You've Got This

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Running an RV park or campground is genuinely one of the more complex small businesses a person can operate. You're managing real estate, hospitality, retail, staffing, maintenance, marketing, finance, and community relations — often simultaneously, often seasonally, and often with a skeleton crew.

If some of what you've read in this course feels daunting, that's okay. No park does all of this perfectly. The best-run parks in the country still have things they're working on, systems they're improving, staff members they're developing.

What separates the parks that grow year after year from the ones that stagnate isn't perfection — it's intentionality. It's the decision to learn, to improve, to hold yourself and your team to high standards, and to take the experience of every guest seriously.

You chose this industry because something about it called to you. Maybe it was the outdoor lifestyle. Maybe it was the idea of building something meaningful in your community. Maybe it was the financial opportunity. Most likely, it was some combination of all three.

This course has given you the framework. The rest is yours to build.

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**Run it well. Build something guests love. The great outdoors  
deserves great parks.**

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## Ready to streamline everything you've just learned?

The strategies and systems in this course work best when your operations are built to support them. Great park management software acts as the backbone of everything — connecting your reservations, pricing, guest communications, staff coordination, maintenance tracking, and financial reporting into one clear picture of your business.

The right platform doesn't just save you time. It captures revenue you'd otherwise miss, delivers guest experiences that build loyalty, and gives you the data to make confident decisions.

Discover how modern park management technology puts everything in this course to work for you — automatically.

**Thank you for downloading this product. WE hope that you find the information informative, and useful. Please check out our website, and if you are an RV Park Owner or Manager, be sure to check out our new Guest Experience platform, 5Star.Camp**



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